

## **Ascend/WMW! Youth Program FAQ**

### **External Use**

#### **1. What is the purpose of the Ascend/WMW! Youth program?**

The program is intended to service Youth with paid work experience to help them explore occupations and career pathways. This program provides benefits to both the employer and Youth including:

- A Youth gaining important job skills and creating future employment references.
- Connecting Youth to a mentor to provide work related support and feedback.
- Employers can get help with projects and tasks while providing a great opportunity to give a community member valuable work experience.
- Invest in the future workforce by providing meaningful work that will teach the Youth important job skills and set them up for future success.

#### **2. What is a Talent Tour?**

Companies open their doors and invite youth to observe their operations first-hand. Tours typically begin with a brief introductory presentation about your company and industry, followed by a walking tour of your facility.

Employer Time Commitment: 2 hours

Employer Benefits: Tell your company's story, dispel misconceptions of your trade, highlight the economic importance of your industry, showcase rewarding careers in your field, and inspire the future workforce to pursue a career in your industry.

#### **3. What is a Job Shadow?**

Job Shadows provide hands-on experience for youth interested in a particular job. Youth come onsite to shadow an employee conducting their day-to-day tasks. Job Shadows are most beneficial when they are conducted with entry-level positions that the youth would be starting in if employed with your company.

Employer Time Commitment: 4 hours

Employer Benefits: Showcase your company and employees, inspire the future workforce to pursue a career in your industry, highlight the skills needed for your in-demand positions, and engage with potential talent. Job shadows allow for employer and employee perspective of the real-world job as opposed to youth misconceptions.

#### **4. What is a Work Experience?**

Work Experiences are Ascend/West Michigan Works! paid learning opportunities in the local workforce for a six (6) week period. This program may be the start of a youth's work history and will teach them job skills and create a future employment reference. Ascend/West Michigan Works! provides support to the youth as they navigate these paid Work Experience opportunities to ensure a successful experience for both the youth and the employer. Some of these supports include tutoring resources, transportation, work-related clothing, childcare, etc.

The program provides employment and training opportunities for enrolled youth. All of the positions are in public or private organizations. These jobs may not be substitutes for jobs performed by regular employees. The participating organizations provide Worksites and supervised work performance, as well as general employment guidance to the youth. During the paid Work Experience, the youth should learn all aspects involved in maintaining employment – showing up on time, working well with others, following directions, dealing with conflict, money management, as well as the specific job skills they will learn within your organization. Work Experiences are meant to provide youth with meaningful work skills and explore career path options. [Program Expectations Here.](#)

Employer Time Commitment: 6 weeks

Employer Benefits: Work Experiences provide an opportunity for your organization to complete projects, educate youth about your industry, positively influence youth, develop leadership skills for both your employees and youth, contribute to our region's economy by helping train the next generation of highly trained workers, and connect with your community.

#### **5. This is my first time offering a Youth work experience, what kind of support will I receive?**

Worksites will be provided with an Employer Resource Portal with rules, regulations, templates, and best practices. This information will provide important details for your supervisor including employer and employee expectations, and Youth employment laws. Employers will also be supported by Manpower who helps provide workers compensation coverage, onboarding, and payroll services for the participant.

Each Youth participant in a Work Experience has support from WMW! Career Coaches. If any issues arise, the Business Solutions Representative for Youth Programs and the Career Coach will work together to address the situation.

#### **6. What type of work would the Youth be able to do?**

**IMPORTANT NOTE:**

Updated 2.7.24

Youth ages 16-17 may **not**:

- Work between 10:30pm-6:00am.
- Use a ladder over twenty (20) feet above the ground
- Drive a vehicle as part of their work.
- Handle items considered hazardous, labeled as combustible and/or dangerous.

Suggested Activities:

- Departmental Project Work
- Marketing
- Social Media
- Community Service Project
- General Administrative Tasks
- Customer Service
- Lawn Care
- Park Maintenance
- Inventory Management
- File Management
- Organization Projects
- Data Entry

## **7. What are the expectations and responsibilities of each party?**

**Worksite Supervisor Responsibilities:**

- Attend Onboarding Meeting
- Attend Meet & Greet
- Complete Employer Orientation
  - Review Agreement & Sign
  - Review Toolkit
  - Work Permit Paperwork
- Direct supervision of youth's work within 100 feet at all times due to WIOA regulations
- Provide learning and training opportunities for the youth while on site
- Review youth's timesheet on a weekly basis and signing
- Meet with youth weekly to discuss performance and complete the evaluation
- Contact Ascend/West Michigan Works! with any issues or concerns that may arise
- Signing and submitting weekly timesheet and evaluation
- Ensuring a safe work environment
- Contacting Manpower if an injury occurs

**Ascend/West Michigan Works! Responsibilities:**

- Funding the Youth's wages
- Dedicating a Career Coach to support and assist the Youth
- Worksite Monitoring to ensure safe and appropriate working conditions
- Providing expectations and instruction on standard work practices to Youth
- Overseeing Youth and payroll process

**Youth Responsibilities:**

- Performing work responsibilities as directed by the Worksite Employer
- Taking responsibility and accountability for their actions
- Applying instructional information to the Worksite
- Notifying supervisors and Career Coach of any work-related issues that may arise, including but not limited to attendance
- Filling out weekly timesheet correctly
- Completing weekly evaluations with supervisor

**Manpower Responsibilities:**

- Payroll services for Youth
- Worker's compensation coverage
- Injury reporting procedures and responses
- Drug testing, when appropriate or requested

**8. What soft skills are Youth working on outside of their work-based learning?**

A Youth Work Experience is part of a larger program to empower and equip our local Youth with important employability skills. Outside of the work experience, youth in the program are learning important skills in relation to Job Survival, Leadership and Self Development, Workplace Skills, and Economic Empowerment. The competencies they learn in the program build on each other and are required to be completed to allow the youth to move from a lower tier to a higher tier.

**9. Do Employers have to pay to participate?**

Our program is funded by state, federal, and private grants and is currently at no cost to the Worksite.

**10. What are the youths' wages**

As of early 2023, youth are paid \$14.00 per hour for their on-site work experiences.

**11. Who pays the youth?**

Ascend/West Michigan Works! funds Work Experiences and related services via WIOA, Young Professionals, and DTE/United Way grants. WMW! contracts with Manpower as the Employer of Record to onboard youth as employees and handle the payroll process.

**12. How long are Work Experiences for?**

Starting at 6 weeks, Work Experiences can be extended up to 10 weeks depending on youth and employer availability and funding. Extensions must be pre-approved through Ascend/West Michigan Works!.

**13. Can Worksites hire youth from their Work Experience?**

Yes. The only request we make is that the Worksite allow the youth to complete their official Work Experience before hiring them. Our program includes other soft skills trainings and services that the youth can benefit from during the program.

**14. What if there is an accident during a Work Experience?**

Employers will need to alert Manpower and Ascend/West Michigan Works! Immediately of any incidents and/or injuries. Information on who to contact can be found here: [2. Manpower and Youth Employment Standards.pdf](#)

**15. Are youth workers required to take a break?**

Yes. All youth participants are required to take a 30-minute break for every 5 hours worked. Youth under the age of 18 are required by law to take a documented 30-minute break every 5 hours. Youth 18+ are required by our program standards to take a documented 30-minute break every 5 hours.

**16. Do 18+ year olds require a 30-minute break every 5 hours of work?**

Yes. All youth participants are required to take a 30-minute break for every 5 hours worked. Youth 18+ are required by our program standards to take a documented 30-minute break every 5 hours.

**17. Can youth work more than 20 hours a week?**

During our Summer Career Readiness Program, youth are expected to get a minimum of 18 hours a week onsite and 2 hours a week with their Ascend/West Michigan Works! Career Coach for a total of 20 hours minimum. In our Year-Round WIOA program, it is possible for youth to work more than 20 hours a week, *however* this must be **pre-approved** by Ascend/West Michigan Works! as weekly hours are dictated by funding sources.

**18. What if a Worksite needs to discipline a youth worker?**

If Employers experience any disciplinary incidents during a youth's shift, they were encouraged to complete our [Issue Form](#) as well as note it on that week's Timesheet and Evaluation. After completing the Issue Form, Employers are instructed to email that form to their youth BSR representative. The representative reviews the incident report and provides a copy to the youth's Career Coach who will address the incident and provide a resolution. That resolution is documented on the Issue Form and sent back to the Employer for their records.

**19. I have a youth, can they get a Work Experience?**

We encourage all out of school youth ages 16-24 to contact us about eligibility and program offerings. During the summer months (June-August) we are able to serve in school youth ages 14-24 as well. Any youth interested in Ascend can find more information here:

<https://jobs.westmiworks.org/ascend-youth-services/>.

*Please note that all youth are required to meet eligibility requirements as dictated by our various funding sources. Only those youth that are deemed eligible may be enrolled in Ascend and receive program offerings such as Work Experiences.*

**20. Who do I contact for information about Ascend/West Michigan Works! youth programming?**

Contacts for Ascend can be found here: [Youth Programs WMW! Contact List.xlsx](#)

**21. Is GRow1000 and Ascend/WMW! the same program?**

No. GRow1000 is a City of Grand Rapids run program via Our Community's Children. West Michigan Works! has partnered with the City of Grand Rapids to help in the management of the program, however the City is the Employer of Record for the youth and dictate the processes and procedures for GRow1000. GRow1000 is partly funded by the Worksites that register to participate. More information can be found here:

<https://www.grandrapidsmi.gov/Government/Programs-and-Initiatives/GRow1000>

Ascend is the West Michigan Works! youth program as managed by the Talent Solutions department. Our program is funded by state, federal, and private grants and is currently at no cost to the Worksite.

**22. Who do I contact about partnering with Ascend/West Michigan Works! on youth programming?**

Contact Youth BSR

Companies interested in hosting a youth for a job shadow, talent tour, or work experience or participating in presentations/webinars can contact the Youth Business Solutions Representative.

Contact Youth Manager

Education institutions interested in funneling youth through our program can contact the Youth Manager in Development & Innovation.

Contact Director of Development and Innovation

Organizations looking for funding for their youth programs can contact our Director of Development and Innovation.

Updated 2.7.24